



## STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DOE f.y.i.

Lucille E. Davy, Commissioner

May 2008

Jon S. Corzine, Governor

### Commissioner's Message

On April 25, the Department underscored its commitment to ensure that every child completes high school with the requisite skills for success with the release of the policy paper, *NJ STEPS: Re-Designing Education in New Jersey for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. The report, prepared by the New Jersey High School Redesign Steering Committee, calls for sweeping reforms in standards and high school graduation requirements, assessment alignment, teachers and school leaders, and aligning instruction from preschool through college (P-16). The report's recommendations follow two years of public meetings held with more than 1,000 educators, members of the public and education stakeholders. I proudly served as a member of the report's steering committee which was co-chaired by Governor Corzine, along with Prudential CEO Arthur F. Ryan and Montclair State University President Susan A. Cole. This policy paper is a must-read for everyone concerned about how to ensure that our high schools successfully meet the challenges of preparing their students for success in life after high school.

For more information about NJSTEPS, visit:

[www.njhighschoolsummit.org](http://www.njhighschoolsummit.org)

### Jersey City Regains Local Control in Two Areas

A contingent of educators led by Commissioner Davy and Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer recently attended a meeting of the Jersey City Board of Education to return to local control the district's governance and fiscal management for the first time in 19 years. The district continues to work with the state to meet monitoring indicators in instruction and program, personnel and operations management.

**Most School Budgets Approved** New Jersey voters approved 73.5 percent of local budgets in this year's annual school election. Commissioner Davy attributed the nearly 3 out of 4 approval rate to increases in state aid under the School Funding Reform Act, which lowered the local levy portion of the budget in many school districts. For details about the 2008 school elections, visit: <http://www.nj.gov/education/data/vote/08>

### New on the Web

Intent to Amend the Student Standards and Assessment Code (resolution)

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/hs/sra/update/amend.pdf>

New Jersey Professional Learning Guide for School Leaders  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/pd/leader/learning.shtml>

### Children, Teachers Focus of Commissioner Visits

Students and teachers shared center stage in recent visits to schools by Commissioner Davy, who participated in the celebration of the Week of the Young Child by visiting preschool or kindergarten classes in Carney's Point, Delanco, Lawrence, Pennsauken, and Woodbury, where she read stories to the young children and discussed the importance of early childhood education with teachers and administrators. Earlier this month, she observed Teacher Appreciation Day by visiting the fourth-grade classroom of one of her childhood friends, Kim Delatour, at the Woodruff Elementary School in Berkeley Heights. Davy praised the work of New Jersey's 110,000 teachers and encouraged young people to choose teaching as a career.

**Kid Tech Day** Last month, the Department of Education's Office of Educational and Information Technology hosted the third Kid Tech Day to celebrate students achieving with educational technology. Fifty-one students and 28 teachers representing all grade levels from 13 schools across the state exhibited and demonstrated their projects for more than 200 attendees. The students' presentations included web-casts, podcasts, video-conferencing with students in other countries, history media projects, environmental science research and bridge designs and models.

**Accountability Regulations Drafted** The Department of Education has released draft regulations concerning school district fiscal accountability, efficient spending practices and budgeting procedures. The draft regulations clarify responsibilities given to DOE and local school districts under the School Funding Reform Act, the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act, the School District Fiscal Accountability Act, and the state Office of Management and Budget travel circular.

"We need to have in place a more transparent process of using public resources more responsibly," said the Commissioner. The draft regulations were released in one comprehensive document so that all of these various elements can be seen in context to each other. The regulations are expected to be in place in time for the start of the 2008-09 school year.

The draft regulations can be accessed through this link:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/news/2008/0430acc.htm>

### UPCOMING EVENTS

New Jersey Schools to Watch Program

<http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=5830>

NCLB Comprehensive Needs Assessment and 2009 Unified Plan Workshop

<http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=6110>